

1397-101
La PB12Sermon preached by Mr. J. K. Popham
on Sunday morning, 4th. August, 1929

Text: Mark 1 v. 27

"And they were all amazed, in so much that they questioned among themselves, saying, What thing is this? What new doctrine is this? for with authority commandeth He even the unclean spirits, and they do obey Him."

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It was the beginning of the gospel, the beginning of the preaching of Jesus Christ. He confirmed His doctrine by miracles, and the sight of these miracles, particularly of the one just recorded, astonished the people. There was such a difference between the perfunctory teaching of the scribes and the Pharisees and the authoritative teaching of the Lord Jesus and then of the confirmation of that teaching by miracles, that they said, 'What thing is this, what has come, what is happening, who is this Person?' And seeing that devils were cast out of the possessed, with one word, so different from the exorcists who used incantations, and who perhaps were in collusion with the unclean spirits, - for we do not know precisely, if at all, what communications may take place between wicked men and devils, - they were amazed. The works of God are amazing, especially the works of God in and by Jesus Christ. A man possessed, - driven and made mad, - coming to the Lord Jesus and the Lord Jesus casting out the unclean spirit, giving the man to sit at His feet; it was a new thing, and everything in Christ is new with respect to the old creation and the old works of creation. And in speaking about this, I will, as enabled, speak of several new things which are brought to light by the gospel.

First of all, there is a new Person revealed in holy Scripture; peerless, unique. This new Person is called the last Adam. Scripture knows, in a representative sense, only two men: Adam, the first Adam, - Christ, the last Adam, the second man, the Lord from heaven. Of this last Adam, the Holy Ghost by Jeremiah says, "The Lord hath created a new thing in the earth, a woman shall compass a man." This respects and foretells His immaculate incarnation, miraculous birth, - born of the virgin Mary, - and this is a new thing. Nature does not foretell this; the ten commandments do not foretell this; it belongs wholly to the gospel, and what a Person!... No mere man. One, "fairer than the children of men." Almighty God and the Man Christ

Jesus, one Person. This is a new thing, new in respect of creation, It is a creation, a new creation. Did you ever see Him? He is seeable. He is sent to be known, and to make Himself known, and to make His Father known. Of Him, wondrous things are foretold. This, is the first of the wondrous things: that in Jesus Christ, "dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." When He walked about Jewry, when He went about doing good, the Eternal God was there. Omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, there. Every step Christ took, God was in Him. Every act He did, God was there, and this is the new thing, - a new Person.

The second thing recorded of Him, is that He is "full of grace and truth." The law was a commandment. Christ, is grace. The law said this: do, and live, forbear to do and disobey, and die. Grace and truth in Jesus Christ say, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." Grace to subdue sin. Truth to guide sinners into the way of peace. Grace to make them Christians, and truth to keep them Christians. Grace to make them fit for heaven, and truth to inform them how they are to get there. And this grace and this truth, the Lord Jesus possesses in infinite fulness. A new Person.

And this third thing is said of Him: that "His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." Strangely beautiful name, "Wonderful". Wonderful in the constitution of His Person. Wonderful in the object of His coming. Wonderful in the grand mission He came on, and wonderful in this: that He is the "new and living way" to God.

"Counsellor", to give counsel to sinners. To tell them where to go for relief, on whom to live, on whose arm to lean. To counsel them to go to the throne of grace in their difficulties, their necessities; to tell them that only can they be cleansed and forgiven, by the blood of Christ. A Counsellor in affliction, a Counsellor to those who are full of care, telling them to cast their care on the Lord because He careth for them.

And this, the next wonderful thing said of Him, is that He is the Resurrection and the Life, and that all who believe in Him shall not die; that He is the Bread of Life; that He raises His people to a spiritual life from their spiritual death, and that He will raise them all at the last day. "This is the will of Him that sent Me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on Him, may have everlasting

life: and I will raise him up at the last day." The Jews were looking for a new thing, that is, for the promised Messiah, but they attached to the promised. Messiah, a kingly character, - an earthly king was to be their Messiah. His kingdom was to be theirs, that is, He was to deliver them from the hateful yoke of their enemies, and He disappointed them. He disappoints men in their carnal expectations of Him. He is not what men expect Him to be, but He is a King. This is the Person, a new Person, not a new man, though He is a man, but not born as men are born. Born of the virgin Mary; born of the creating act and power of the Holy Ghost who descended upon her. Thus, this Lord Jesus is the last Adam. The first Adam was just the immediate creation of God; the second Adam is the immediate creation of God - God the Holy Ghost. "The Lord hath created a new thing in the earth." O Christians, behold this Lord; this new thing; the wondrous Person of Emmanuel; the Child born, the Son given; one Person, one Christ. They said, "What thing is this? What new doctrine is this?" Why, the doctrine of Christ, the doctrine of His power, the doctrine of His goodness; the goodness of God manifested in this blessed Person.

Another thing is this: a new covenant. The old covenant is a covenant of works. All of us are under, and in that covenant by nature, and because our works are not good, we are under condemnation; every unregenerate person, so dying, dies under that condemning covenant, that cursing covenant. "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them", and you, myself and all men are naturally under that curse. It is the old covenant. Now says God by Jeremiah, and Paul quotes it in the Hebrews, finding fault with them in that covenant; knowing that in that covenant no man can live, for, "by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified." Says God, "Behold ---- I will make a new covenant." A new covenant, - a new engagement. It is established upon better promises than the old. The old covenant had a conditional promise: do this, do your duty. That is what we ought to do, but cannot. Do your duty and you shall live. What a condition, ... and every one of us here, by nature, is under that condition, and there is a terrible sanction in that covenant. "In the day that thou eatest thereof" (that is, of the forbidden tree) "thou shalt surely die." Now says God, "I will make a new covenant" - a new engagement concerning men, not with men. The first was with men, with us all. The second, is about some men, and

that is with Jesus Christ. 'I have made a covenant with Him, My Chosen. I have, in that covenant, laid help upon Him who is mighty, and My covenant shall not be broken. I will not alter it.' And He confirms it by two things: the promise and His oath, and He seals it by the blood of Christ. The blood of Christ is the blood of the everlasting covenant. It is sealed in that way. O to have an interest in it! Think of it dear friends, a covenant made with the Head, Jesus Christ. A covenant, all of whose conditions - and there were conditions in it, - He fulfilled. The best enquiry we can be making on our knees from time to time, is whether we have a part and lot in that covenant; whether the Lord God laid our sins on the Lord Jesus in that covenant; whether He gave us a part and lot in Christ in that covenant; whether He made Christ our Head in that covenant. If we be making that enquiry, we are under a good Teacher.

The next new thing and doctrine, is this: a new life; an absolutely new life, lived by the last Adam, fulfilling in every iota the conditions of the old covenant with respect to His bodily church. O what a life! Perfect in every particular, so that He Himself could say to His Father, 'I do always those things that please Thee.' (John 8 v. 29) We, do not. What Christian man or woman would ever bend his knees, or her knees, before God, and say, 'Lord, I always do the right thing, I always do what pleases Thee.' Not one. But the Lord Jesus did always, in every act, every thought, every motion, every prayer, every word, those things that pleased His Father. And in that life, He was a representative. He did not those things for Himself, but for His people, that they should stand in that obedience of His, so as to be without spot.

And the next thing to name, is this: a new death. Ever since Adam's transgression, men have been dying; dying of necessity, dying as part of the penalty due to their sins. We, shall die a common death. Jesus died a new kind of death. Let me name it to you, and may the Holy Spirit make it out and manifest it in the sweetness, and the greatness, and the efficacy of it. He died a vicarious death, He died for others; He died to put away sin. He died a voluntary death, this blessed Lord Jesus; He laid down His life. No man took it from Him, He laid it down, and He did it obediently. He was "obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." "What new thing is this? What new doctrine is this?" Well, it is the doctrine of God's eternal love to His people, that He loved them with an

everlasting love and would not have them sink into perdition under their sins. It is the doctrine of God's love. The love of the Father in election, the love of the Son in coming to redeem the election of grace, and the love of the Holy Ghost in undertaking to quicken all of them in God's time. This is the doctrine, - God's love. "God is love", and that love flows in the channel of eternal choice of men; in the channel of the incarnation of His Beloved Son; in the channel of the covenant of grace; in the channel of the imputation of sin to the sinless Lord Jesus. The love of God is thus expressed in the Romans, that God "spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all." "What doctrine is this?" It is the doctrine of God the Son becoming man. In the fulness of the time, "God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." It is the doctrine of imputation of sin to Jesus Christ. "He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." It is the doctrine of Christ laying down His life, that His people might live eternally. It is the doctrine of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ from the dead, and whatever men may say in contradiction of that, it is a truth attested in Holy Scripture. O what wonderful proofs Christ gave of His resurrection from the dead. This then, is the "new thing", and God in His great mercy enable us to believe it, and cause it to be life in our souls.

Now the next new thing, is this: a new creature. A new creature distinguished from the old man. The old man is the man of sin, - the body of sin and death, - which means that every man born into this world, is born dead in trespasses and sins, ignorant of God. There is no man here, or in the whole world who can properly lay claim to a different, a better condition, than that by his natural birth, Every one of us came into this world sinful. Born in sin, shapen in iniquity. That is the best that can be said of us as sinners. I do not like it, you do not like it, none of us like to believe that of ourselves, but that is the truth. Dead in trespasses and sins, - "As in Adam all die, ----" O my friends, if we are buried in that state there is no heaven for us, only hell, but, there is a new creature. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." How many in this congregation can lay claim, by the Spirit's grace to that wondrous mercy, that great distinction - "a new creature." How does a man become a new creature? That question perplexed Nicodemus. "How can a man be born when he is

old?" How can a man, a sinner become a saint? How can a dead sinner become a living child of God? How can an enemy be made God's friend? Questions, - great questions! There is one answer, and only one. "Ye must be born again." And everyone born again is said by the Holy Ghost to be created in righteousness and true holiness after the image of Him that created him. That is a Christian man, and there is no Christian who is not born again. Let us not confuse Christendom with true Christianity. A true Christian is a man who is born again, created by the Holy Spirit in righteousness and true holiness. That is religion, - true religion. That is saving religion; that is the image of God; that is a work pleasing to God. O dear friends, God grant that you may be born again who are not as yet born again. No heaven for men who are not born again. No Christ for men who die dead in trespasses and sins, no knowledge of God, no forgiveness of sins, no justification. What doctrine is this? It is the doctrine of this Book. Great doctrine. Says the Apostle Paul to the Galatians in this great matter, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, neither male nor female." The only thing that avails is a new creature. How pleasing to God is this new creature when the Christian kneels before God and confesses his sins. How pleasing is the face of that new creature. Says the Lord Jesus to the new creature, "O My dove, that art in the clefts of the rock, in the secret places of the stairs, let Me see thy countenance, let Me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice and thy countenance is comely." A sinner confessing his sins, expressing his wants, going with his needs, telling the Lord how weak he is, how poor, how ignorant, how unable to bear the cross, how much he needs, how much he desires Jesus Christ, and says the Lord, 'O thy voice is a sweet voice.' Prayer is sweet to Christ, to the Father to whom it ascends through Christ by the Holy Spirit. Every praying person is a beautiful person in the sight of God, because he is a new creature. The gospel declares this in this, as in the beginning of this chapter, "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ." The beginning of the new life when Christ is formed in the heart of the sinner. Take courage then, those of you who are fearful, who may say again and again, 'We have no religion worth the having,' who may be saying, 'We daily sin and fall and fail,' - take courage, He says, "Let Me see thy countenance, let Me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice." O prayer is sweet to Christ. "Thy countenance is comely." "What new doctrine is this?" Men never would have imagined it, could not, that there should be a new creation in the

world, a new creature in Christ. What, no works to avail? What, all my duties nothing? No, nothing better than this terrible word, sin, - nothing better. A saint says,

"My best is stained and dyed with sin;
My all is nothing worth."

What must be said of a man who may be very religious and who may say his prayers regularly? This: 'What hast thou to do to tread My courts, or to take My covenant into thy lips.' (Ps. 50 v. 16.)

And there is another doctrine which I would press upon your notice, namely, the doctrine of the free forgiveness of sins. The gospel of the kingdom is to be preached. When the Jews were offended with Christ because He said to a man, "Thy sins be forgiven thee", He said to the man, "Take up thy bed, and walk", which means that forgiveness and walking before God are the same thing. Forgiveness will put you straight with God. Nothing else can. Forgiveness will put you straight with God, - conscience straight, heart right, will right, understanding right. Forgiveness puts a man right and straight with God. Ah, if you have not forgiveness you are not right. One says, 'I want it.' Then ask for it and you will receive it. A man who cannot do without it, who is unhappy; whose sins burden him, he goes, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and prays for it, and in God's time it comes to him. "Ask, and ye shall receive." - "Seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you." Go then, you who feel sin, to the throne of God's heavenly grace. Go with fresh guilt, with accumulated sins and burdens, and the Lord says, "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." Well, what a doctrine this is. The doctrine of the free forgiveness of sins. Why sinner, when you get forgiveness you will get heaven; heaven in the beginning of it, heaven in your feelings, heaven in your conscience, heaven in your heart, heaven in the smile of God upon your soul. O, it is great to be forgiven.

"Forgiveness! 'tis a joyful sound
To malefactors doomed to die."

And there is another doctrine; a new doctrine, new to the world. It was sounded in the ceremonial law, but not understood by many. Every sacrifice spoke of this doctrine, namely, the absolute justification of the sinner, the absolute justification of the sinner! What a wonder. A man whose nature is unjust, justified freely

through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. This is the new doctrine. Christ said to the Pharisees, or rather to those who heard Him, "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into ----- heaven." What a doctrine that is. Offensive of course to our nature. If any one here says, 'that is a very bad doctrine and I hate it', I can understand it, for I hated it and I believe all men hate it by nature. "The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither can be", but O how welcome to the guilty conscience, how welcome to the man who says, "I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips"; to the man who says, 'My best is but filthiness, God has taught me that my righteousnesses are but filthy rags to Him.' When the Spirit brings justification, it is a most beautiful doctrine, welcome to his heart, saving to his soul, peace-giving to his conscience. O he is a happy man who is justified.

Now I must close with one more word in this new matter, this "new doctrine", and that is: that devils obey the Lord Jesus. 'I have got none,' says a Pharisee. Many a child of God, all God's children, sooner or later, more or less distinctly say, in humble confession, 'Lord, I have many devils. I have the devil of unbelief, the devil of ingratitude, the devil of a hard heart, the devil of many many evil thoughts, and I am tempted sometimes of the devil. What can I do, what can I do?' Well, the Lord help you to do as this poor man did who was in the synagogue: go to Christ. He came to the Lord Jesus, - he cried to Him. You make your case known. All the evils of human nature must obey the Lord of life and glory. The unbelief, the devil of unbelief, and it is one of the worst devils that ever infested and indwelt a sinner, must go out when He says, "Behold Me, behold Me." A revelation of Christ, kills for the time-being, unbelief. No doubt can consist with Christ's presence, no unbelief can thrive in the soul, when the Lord Jesus speaks to a sinner. Men look on, but they do not understand. "Even the unclean spirits -- they -- obey Him", and whatever you have of uncleanness in your heart O child of God, whatever devils may possess you, even though they be legion, you only need one word, that not your own, not a friend's, not the minister's; the one word you need, is this: Christ's word, saying to the devil, 'Come out of him, let him alone, leave him; leave him to sit at My feet, to worship Me, to love Me, to cleave to Me, to find his life and his all in Me. Come out of him!' What cross have you, what troubles have you,

what difficulties have you, what providential trials have you, O child of God? 'Many,' you say. Then I repeat again, all you need is for the Lord Jesus to say, 'Come out of him; devil let him alone, lust let him alone, cross let him alone; come out of the man,' and the Saviour saying in your heart, 'Come to Me and cast all on Me, live on Me, lean on Me, follow Me,' and all will be well and you will be amazed, amazed at yourself, amazed at His love, amazed at His goodness and perhaps you will say with good Berridge, amazed that one you murdered gives you heaven. What an amazement, that the sinner whose sins crucified Christ, a sinner whose wickedness has often grieved and vexed the Holy Spirit, a sinner who has done things that he could with both hands, that such a sinner should be so blessed as to say, 'though I murdered Him with my sins, He gives me heaven.' And the hope of that is so great, so sweet, so beautiful that all the man can do, who feels it, is to fall down and worship Him. Be this given to us.

I have to say that one of our members died last Thursday. He has been away from Brighton for some years. A good many of you may not even know his name. He has been a member with us for a good many years, Mr. Endersby. Just before he died he said, "I am glad heaven is so near." He was perfectly satisfied. He has had many years of affliction, been very helpless, kept his bed for years and suffered much, and it was good news to me when last Friday afternoon I got word that he had departed. He is now absent from the body and present with the Lord. What a change. The new doctrine of the gospel, the blessed revelation of the gospel was his by the Holy Spirit, and all sin, all failings, all shortcomings done away with, and now a spirit made perfect, with all the spirits of holy apostles and prophets and saints and martyrs of Jesus, he is numbered. When we die, may it be said of us: "Absent from the body, --- present with the Lord."